PROFILE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES OF LATE NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINGHA

- Born at Jorhat on 1st March, 1928. He was the eldest son of Late Dandeswar Singha, a direct descendant of Ahom King.

- He obtained B.A. Degree from J.B. college, Jorhat.

- He made a mark in the sports field by representing Jorhat Club team, which reached final in the Independence Day Football Cup Tournament at Nagaon in 1950.

- His ability in the sports organization was appreciated first in 1950-51, when Guwahati University team won the Runurs-up Trophy in the All India Inter University Football Tournament, participating for the first time with Late Nripendra Narayan Singha as its Manager. He was also selected as the Manager of the first Guwahati University Cricket team for Inter University Cricket Tournament, held at Kolkata in 1952.

- He was a promoter of the Assam Hockey Association (AHA), which was established at Jorhat in 1955. He was associated with establishment of the Assam Women Hockey Association and also elected as its President subsequently.

- Jorhat was the nursery for late Nripendra Narayan Singha in his carrier as the Football referee, where he reached the National status. He was in National referee Panel for the Sontosh Trophy Football Tournaments in 1959 (Nagaon) and 1964 (Guwahati). He also supervised the final match at Guwahati with distinction.

- Late Nripendra Narayan Singha served the Assam Football Association (AFA) as Secretary & Chairman of the Referee's Board, Hon. Secretary (1979-81) and Vice-President of the Association. He was actively associated with AFA for more than four decades.

- He was an umpire of the State Panel of Assam Cricket Association.

- He was a Hon. Secretary of the Jorhat Table Tennis Association and was also elected as Vice–President of Assam Table Tennis Association (ATTA).

- He played pivotal role in establishment of the state Associations, namely Boxing, Archery, Khokho, Kabadi etc.

- Late Nripendra Narayan Singha opted to serve the state sports Council, Assam with Headquarter at Shillong in 1960 (shifted to Guwahati afterwards) instead of a Govt. Job in consideration of his sincere desire to serve the Games and Sports of the State. He joined as working Secretary, then as Asstt. Secretary/ joined Secretary till 1990, He was associated with the organization subsequently as its advisor till 1999.

- He was honoured by the state govt. In 1990 with a sports pension.

- The rural sports programme of the state were strengthened and streamlined during seventees under his leadership, particularly through the State Sports Council, Assam.

streamlined during seventees under his leadership, particularly through the State Sports Council, Assam.

- Late Nripendra Narayan Singh served in the Assam Tribune during 1955-59 as its sports correspondence.

- He remained as a Bachelor for apprehension of affecting his sports activities by a married life.

- Keeping in view the outstanding contributions of late Nripendra Narayan Singha towards promotion and development of Games and Sports in Assam, a Sports organizer Award was initiated in his name from the year 2003, by creating "Nripendra Narayan Singha Sports Organizer Award" Trust on 28 August 2002, for the first time in Assam to honour Sports organizer (s) of the state annually for his/their dedicated and selfless service towards promotion and development of Games and Sports of Assam.

- He expired on 27th January 2015.

Nripendra Narayan Singha: icon of Assam sports

Nripendra Narayan Singha, a pioneering figure in the sporting environment of Assam, started his career as a football player when he was a student at the Jorhat Government Boys' High School, an institute which was instrumental in establishing Jorhat as a sports centre of undivided Assam, including Manipur during the 30s, organising three State-level sports festivals, which ended with Assam Olympics in 1940.

However, the advancement of the Japanese forces in July 1942 towards Assam in general and Jorhat in particular converted the latter into a military cantonment. Obviously, all sports infrastructure were subsequently dismantled. Even under such circumstances, young and enthusiastic Nripendra Narayan Singha could keep alive football activities on the outskirts of Jorhat town with the support of a few local persons, which helped to rebuild the sports environment in the town, immediately after the end of World War-II.

The golden era of Assam sports began at Jorhat just after independence. Thereafter, Nripendra Narayan Singha made his mark as a football player, then sports organiser at the Gauhati University, and thereafter as sports promoter and esteemed national-level football referee. No doubt, he was inspired by his uncle Rajkumar Nagendra Narayan Singha, a sportsman, who adopted the spirit of European sports culture during his youth.

The true spirit of Nripendra Narayan Singha in serving games and sports was his dedication and selfless attitude, which can be gauged while analysing his career during the 50s. An Arts graduate from Gauhati University, he was a direct descendent of the last Ahom King Purandar Singha.

Incidentally, a few prominent sports personalities of the town tried to place him in a respectable Government job. It was admirable that Nripendada declined the job because of his apprehension that he might not be able to serve sports as per his desire. However, he accepted the position of assistant secretary of the State Sports Council, Assam (SSCA), which was established in 1960 with its headquarter in Shillong. Though the remuneration was very meagre, he could barely scrape through due to the support extended by his maternal uncle Dr Sidheswar Buragohain, who resided at Shillong. His family too supported him at Guwahati till he shifted to Jorhat.

The office of the SSCA at Khelsal Club was acquired by NSCA and served primarily as a hub of the sports organisers of the region because of his sincere service and amiable personality. Thus, he could forge unity amongst the sports organisers of the region. After transfer of the office to the Nehru Stadium (RG Baruah Complex) at Guwahati in 1974, his office became a source of inspiration for the sporting fraternity. Sports organisers and sports personnel of other States also called on him for advice and assistance, and even otherwise. This was possible only due to his visionary spirit, dedication and magnanimity in extending help and guidance during difficulties. Thus, the SSCA office served as the epicentre of sports activities not only in Assam, but in the entire region. He served as joint secretary and later on as the advisor of the Council.

One of the greatest contributions of NN Singha was the promotion and development of sports in rural areas, conventionally known as rural sports.

Further, promoting the Assam Hockey Association at Jorhat in 1954, he took active part in organising several sports organisations.

At a very critical period, Singha accepted the office of the Honorary Secretary, Assam Football Association.

I for one, could learn from Nripen *dada* about the utility of studying sports literature and history. He subsequently guided me in organising two sports development work shops, the reports of which are still considered as valuable documents. The first report is a path finder in establishment of the Directorate of Sports in Assam and introduction of yoga by the Union Ministry of Education in the Central schools.

Considering his qualities, a trust was established in 2002 under the name of Nripendra Narayan Singha Sports Organiser Award Trust to honour those who serve the cause of sports by adopting his spirit. After his death, it was resolved to gear up activities in order to keep the name of Nripendra Narayan Singha alive in the minds of the sporting fraternity of the State.

– Dr Tapan Dutta